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DUTY OF VOTING

FOR RIGHTEOUS MEN FOR OFFICE.

Christ is the Supreme Ruler and Lawgiver ;

Civil government is his ordinance ;

Its officers are his ministers, and therefore they should be just men ;

Voters are his appointing agents, and are held responsible to him for the votes they give.

I. Christ is the Supreme Ruler and Lawgiver. To him is "given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away ; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—Dan. vii : 14. This shows clearly that his authority over all nations is supreme. He is the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands," that shall break in pieces and consume all kingdoms that oppose his reign.—Dan. ii : 34, 35, 44. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."—Ps. ii : 2, 3. Here the kings and rulers are represented as conspiring against his authority ; but, in despite of them, the Father determined to place his Son upon the throne, and to give the nations into his hand. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces, like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth ; serve the Lord with fear, and

rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."—Ps. ii: 6, 8—12. Such are the ancient predictions respecting the dominion of Christ over all nations. The nations are rightfully his, both by creation and redemption. Hence, "the government shall be upon his shoulders."—Isa. ix: 6. "To him is given all power in heaven and in earth."—Matt. xxviii: 18. He is the "only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."—1 Tim. vi: 15. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."—Phill. ii: 10. "For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings."—Rev. xvii: 14. These sacred passages most clearly prove that Christ is the Supreme Ruler and Lawgiver, and that all nations and their rulers are placed under his authority. And consequently, he should be acknowledged, in every civil constitution, as the rightful ruler of all nations.

II. Civil government is Christ's ordinance. "The powers that be are ordained of God; whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."—Rom. xiii: 1, 2. God gave to men all the rights necessary to the enjoyment of happiness in the present life, and he ordained civil government to secure to them the free exercise of those rights. All the principles of right by which men are to be governed, are clearly revealed in the sacred oracles. Love is to be the governing principle in all legislation. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." These short sentences contain all the rules necessary to a just legislation. The legislator should be guided by the law of love in all his legislation. This will secure the infliction of due punishment for the

crimes that injure society, and promote misery among men. Love to the whole requires the just punishment of criminals. Civil government is of vast importance, and greatly promotes the welfare of all classes of human beings, when rightfully exercised. Hence, its authority should be duly regarded; and it should be esteemed as one of Heaven's best gifts to men.

III. Civil officers are Christ's ministers, and therefore they should be just men. Paul says of the civil magistrate, that "he is the minister of God to thee for good." And that "he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."—Rom. xiii: 4. And he urges the duty of paying tribute, on the ground that magistrates "are God's ministers."—Rom. xiii: 6. In view of these inspired declarations, it is presumed that none will deny that civil officers are Christ's ministers; and it follows that they ought to be just men, who will render to God and man what is due. This conclusion is fully sustained by the voice of inspiration: "Thou shalt provide, out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people."—Exo. xviii: 21, 25. "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds."—2 Sam. xxiii: 3, 4. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. The ruler is a minister of God for good; a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."—Rom. xiii: 3, 4. Thus the sacred oracles fully sustain the conclusion that civil officers should be just men, spotless in character as the morning without clouds.

IV. Voters are Christ's appointing agents, and are

held responsible to him for the votes they give. In the United States, the officers are elected by the people; consequently, the voters are Christ's appointing agents, to appoint the civil rulers who are to be his ministers for good. Now, if it be Christ's will, that just men fearing God, and men of truth, should be appointed, is it not the duty of the voters, who, by his providences, are made his agents, to appoint such? Can any one possibly doubt that it is Christ's will, that righteous men should be appointed to legislate, and administer justice? And if there can be no doubt respecting his will, there can be none in respect to the duty of voting for such as he wills to be in office. The obligation to vote for just men to be rulers, may be enforced by a variety of considerations.

1st. It is clearly the will of Christ that men should thus vote, whether they be professors of religion or not. All are bound to regard his will. He has a rightful claim to the services of all, as the creatures of his power. He commands "all men, every where, to repent." The obligation to obey Christ, lies upon all men; none can escape from his power and authority. Hence, all shall answer to him, at the judgment-seat, for every vote given.

2. To vote for wicked men to fill civil offices, is to corrupt the ordinance of God. And will Christ hold the man guiltless, that corrupts an important ordinance of God, and one designed to secure the welfare and happiness of millions of rational beings? Just in proportion to the vast importance of civil government, is the magnitude of the sin of voting for wicked men.

3. Voting for wicked men, makes them Christ's ministers, and thus profanes the offices he has ordained for the protection of the innocent, and the punishment of the vicious. Is not such voting highly criminal, and most offensive to God? Is it not one of the works that God will bring into judgment?

4. Voting for wicked men, justifies them in their wickedness; and "He that justifieth the wicked—is an abomination to the Lord."—Prov. xvii: 15. Is it a light matter for a man so to cast his vote, as to make himself an abomination to the Lord?

5. Voting for wicked men, causes the people to mourn; "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."—Prov. xxix: 2. "As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people."—Prov. xxviii: 15. Wicked rulers pervert justice, and bring calamity upon the people. Of this we have a shocking specimen in the fugitive slave enactment by Congress; by which thousands of innocent people were driven from their houses and homes into a foreign land, there to endure starvation and want; and by which, innocent and helpless men are, in the heart of this professedly Christian country, torn from their wives and children, and driven into perpetual slavery. Under this barbarous enactment, the whole land mourns, so far as humane feeling extends. Under it every compassionate heart bleeds, and every benevolent bosom throbs with anguish. And yet how many professors of religion voted for the wicked men who formed this cruel enactment. And how much greater number of such voted for men to fill the office of the presidency, who had pledged themselves to sustain this wicked and grievous enactment! Surely such voters must meet, at the judgment-seat of Christ, all the oppressions resulting from their votes. All the wicked and cruel enactments of the States and general government are the results of voting for wicked men; and consequently the voters are responsible for all the governmental oppressions of the United States. What a long and dreadful account must be given at the judgment-seat of Christ, respecting the millions that have perished and are now perishing, by

the oppressions of this nation ! What an astounding fact it is, that there are in this Christian nation more than three millions of people with respect to whom there is not one sentence of law to protect the marriage rite, nor the family relations ; and who are prohibited, by severe penalties, from learning to read the word of life. They are bought and sold, as if they were beasts of the field ! What floods of tears daily water the face of the ground ! What agonizing groans hourly ascend to heaven ! And what streams of blood flow from their scourged and tortured bodies ! All these tears, groans, and streams of blood must be met in the day of judgment, by all the voters who have sustained, and those who do now sustain this horrible system of oppression. Every one of them "shall give an account of himself to God."—Rom. xiv : 12.

6. Voting for wicked men tends to increase wickedness. The wicked example of rulers has great influence on the masses of the people, and is calculated to encourage them to engage in vicious practices. "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted."—Ps. xii : 8. Therefore, he that votes for wicked men, is a promoter of wickedness, and must answer for it when he comes to judgment.

7. Voting for wicked men endangers our republican institutions. Men who do not fear God are ever liable, when in power, to oppress the people, and to turn a republic into a military despotism. The late president ordered out the military to enforce, against the consciences and humanity of the people of Boston, the fugitive slave enactment ; and thus far made the government a military despotism, and that of the worst form. Who does not know, that a few hundred thousand slave-holders control the general government, and that they have made us a nation of slave-catchers ? Under their domination, the government has commanded us to do the most cruel

and degrading service under heaven. What can be more cruel, than to catch the panting fugitive, and deliver him over to torments life-long? And what can be more degrading, than to take rank with bloodhounds? Can a republic, that thus degrades its citizens, be long sustained? All this tyranny and degradation are the results of voting for wicked men, who have no fear of God before their eyes.

8. It must be admitted, that it is the duty of all, to pray that God may give the nation good rulers; but to pray thus, and then vote for adulterers and fornicators, for duelists and slaveholders, as many professors of religion have done, is a heaven-daring sin. We should not thus provoke God to anger. If it be our duty to pray that God may give us good rulers, it is our duty to vote for righteous men who fear God and hate covetousness.

9. Voting for wicked men, will, if continued, ultimately so corrupt the nation, and involve it in crime, as to cause God either to abandon it to self-destruction, or to inflict upon it the most dreadful and destructive judgments, as he did upon Israel of old. Our national sins far transcend theirs in number and magnitude. It may be said, in respect to us, as it was in respect to them, "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"—Jer. v: 9.

10. By voting just men into office, the nation may be reformed, and all unjust and sinful enactments may be abolished, and the best interests of all classes of people may be secured. Let just men be put in office, and the government will soon be relieved from the evils that now threaten its destruction, and disturb the peace of the nation. There is no one point in which the Church and nation more certainly need reform than in that of voting. This important privilege has been greatly abused by professors of religion, as well as by others. This is the prominent source of the deplorable oppressions and evils

that now exist in our country ; and nothing but reformation can save this mighty nation from the most terrible ruin. Will not all denominations of Christians unite their efforts and their influence to secure the election of just men to office ? We should not be deterred by the cry of uniting Church and State. Where so many denominations exist, there can be no danger of any such union ever taking place. There is vastly more danger of uniting Infidelity and the State. Let wicked and designing men raise that cry, if they choose, in order to secure to themselves the offices of the government, and carry on their oppressions, as they have done in times past ; but let Christians be faithful to Him who will rule all rebellious nations with a rod of iron, and will dash in pieces all tyrannical kingdoms. We should not vote for wicked men, to sustain the better party. We must not do evil, that good may come ; nor choose to commit the least of two sins, by voting for one wicked man, in preference to another that is worse. If it be a sin to vote for a wicked man, we must not commit that sin to secure any good that may result. We should give our votes as religiously as we pray. We should have no politics but such as come from God ; and all we do should be done to his glory.

If all the Christian denominations will but unite in voting for good men, slavery can be abolished, and the sighing millions now in bondage can be set free : intemperance and Sabbath-breaking can, to great extent, be banished from the land, and thousands now sitting in sadness, degradation, and want, can be elevated and made happy. Were this nation redeemed from the sin and disgrace of slavery, a sighing world would rejoice, and angels might sing anew, “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.”



